

## Mighty writers

by MORGAN PHILLIPS

For nearly four decades, the Friends of the Tulsa City-County Libraries have encouraged local writers to submit their original work to the Adult Creative Writing Contest.

Manuscripts for the 2016 contest were due Jan. 31, and local professors and English teachers will anonymously judge the entries.

At the April 9 awards ceremony, first-place winners will read short selections from their entries. Tulsa World Columnist **Jay Cronley** will be the guest speaker.

**38** Years the Friends have hosted an adult creative writing contest.

**18** Is the minimum age of contest participants. Participants also must reside, work or attend school in Tulsa County or have a non-resident Tulsa library card.

**4** Categories of work can be submitted: poetry, informal essay, children's fiction and short story.

**5,000** Words is the maximum submission length for short stories. The maximum submission length for poetry is 400 words.

**1<sup>st</sup>** And second-place winners in each category receive cash prizes of \$100 and \$50, respectively.

**129** People entered the 2016 contest by press time.

**162** Entries were submitted for 2016 by press time.

**\$6** Is the entry fee for each manuscript. There is no limit on the number of entries per person, although first-place winners cannot enter the same category the following year.

**\$10** Is the cost to join Friends of the Tulsa City-County Libraries, a nonprofit arm of the library system that plans library programs and activities.

April 9

**39TH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARIES ADULT CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST AWARD CEREMONY**

2:30 p.m. Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave.

Free and open to the public.

Visit [www.tulsalibrary.org/friends/contest](http://www.tulsalibrary.org/friends/contest).



Evan Taylor

Crews removed more than 16 tons of gypsum plaster and lead pipes from the building Bradley Garcia bought in 1998. Initially the building had neither electricity nor water. Today the rehabbed structure houses Gypsy Coffee House, Garcia's salon and his home.

# Coffee house visionary

Bradley Garcia was downtown before downtown was cool.

by JANE ZEMEL

**B**radley Garcia had two reasons for buying the building at East Cameron Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in 1998.

First, "Tulsa had to grow this way," he says from his Brady neighborhood location. "If the city were to ever have an arts district, it would have to be here. It was the only area with an inventory of older buildings."

Secondly, he wanted coffee and croissants early in the morning. So, he opened Gypsy Coffee House.

"I had zero money," Garcia says. "No bank would touch me."

He sold three businesses and gave up his Mercedes and home in Maple Ridge to raise the cash. What he lacked in restaurateur experience he made up for in confidence. And vision.

"I never doubted anything I decided to do," he says.

The 1906 building was originally the headquarters for Gypsy Oil Co., owned by **J. Paul Getty** and **A.K. Warren**. By 1998, it was mostly abandoned and nowhere near code. Neighbors called the adjacent warehouse the Hobo Hilton, referring to the 15-20 people who lived in or under — yes, under — the building.

Garcia acted as general contractor for the complete overhaul. The city's first multi-zone rehab came with a razor-sharp learning curve for the new owner.

"It was an arduous task," he says. But there was that vision.

"I wanted it to be a 1960s-like Beatnik hangout," he says.

For years, Gypsy Coffee House was a gathering place for teens, hosting raves and all-night dance festivals.

More recently, it's a familiar stop on the Tulsa music scene. The Gypsy has the longest-running open mic night in Oklahoma — nearly 900 nights and counting.

"All original stuff, no covers. Sometimes magic, sometimes teenage angst," Garcia says.

Now in its 17th year, the Gypsy offers gourmet coffees, pour-overs, cold brews and 40-plus varieties of tea. Customers from age 8-80 also come for baked goods, salads, flatbreads and sandwiches.

"The first 10 years, there were never any families," Garcia says. "Now, they're everywhere."

The building's top two floors include his second business, a salon, and his "bohemian hideaway" — home sweet home.

He likes being able to walk wherever he needs — "except to a grocery store." And he loves the vibe, calling his location "the epicenter of the arts movement here in Tulsa."

After nearly two decades, Garcia's vision has paid off.

"It's been a lesson in humility, patience and servitude," he jokes. **tp**